<u>What is claimed is</u>:

1. A method of recommending loans to a user based upon a user-selected loan purpose, the method comprising:

requesting from the user a purpose for the loan;

receiving the user-selected loan purpose; and

recommending loans for the user based upon the user-selected loan purpose.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining if the user is a homeowner.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, suggesting to the user one or more loan options based on the user-selected loan purpose.

4. The method of claim 2 further comprising, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, suggesting to the user one or more collateralized loan options based on the user-selected loan purpose.

5. The method of Claim 2 further comprising, if the user is a homeowner or if the user-selected loan purpose is to purchase a home:

receiving from the user one or more loan-related input parameters;

determining which loans are to be recommended to the user based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters; and

suggesting to the user one or more loans based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein suggesting to the user the one or more loans based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters comprises providing the user with multiple loan recommendations based upon a level of acceptable user risk.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein determining which loans are to be recommended to the user further comprises:

searching for additional loan-related input parameters; and

incorporating said additional loan-related input parameters into the step of determining which loans are to be recommended to the user.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's credit rating.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein the user's credit rating is a real-time input parameter.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's current loan status, wherein the user's current loan status is determined by whether the user currently has one or more outstanding loans.

11.   The method of claim 7 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's goal.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the user's goal is to minimize total payments.

13.   The method of claim 11 wherein the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest costs.

14.   The method of claim 11 wherein, if the user has one or more outstanding loans, the user's goal is to pay off the suggested loan in the same amount of time as the time remaining on the user's one or more outstanding loans.

15.   The method of claim 11 wherein determining which loans are to be recommended to the user comprises:

        determining which loan options are available to the user based upon the user's loan purpose and the user's current loan status; and

        calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option based upon the user's goal.

16.   The method of claim 15 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to purchase a vehicle or to refinance an existing vehicle loan and the user's goal is to minimize total payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

        determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding principal portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term of the loan to obtain loan-specific total

principal payments;

comparing the loan-specific total principal payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total principal

payment.

17.   The method of claim 15 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to purchase a vehicle or

refinance an existing vehicle loan and the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest payments,

calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding interest portion

of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term of the loan to obtain loan-specific total

interest payments;

comparing the loan-specific total interest payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total interest

payment.

18.   The method of claim 15 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to obtain cash or to save

on their mortgage and the user's goal is to minimize total payments, calculating the most cost-

effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding principal portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by addition of applicable closing costs and points;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term the user intends to keep the loan to obtain total loan-specific principal payments;

comparing the total loan-specific payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having the lowest total payment.

19.   The method of claim 15 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to obtain cash or to save on their mortgage and the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding interest portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by addition of applicable closing costs, points and tax rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term the user intends to keep the loan to obtain loan-specific total interest payments;

comparing the total loan-specific interest payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having lower total interest payments.

20.   A system for recommending loans to a user associated with a user station, the system comprising:

a communications network; and

a server operatively connected to the communications network;

wherein the server transmits requests for a user-selected loan purpose, each user station

being associated with a respective display terminal for displaying a web page, the server further

receiving a transmittal containing the user-selected loan purpose from each said user station and

recommending loans for each of the one or more users based upon the user-selected loan

purpose.

21.   The system of claim 20 further comprising a database including user profile information.

22.   The system of claim 20 wherein the server is capable of determining if each said user is a

homeowner.

23.   The system of claim 22 wherein, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if

the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, the server transmits to the user a

suggestion for one or more unsecured loan options tailored to the user-selected loan purpose.

24.   The system of claim 20 wherein, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if

the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, the server transmits to the user a

suggestion for one or more collateralized loan options tailored to the user-selected loan purpose.

25.   The system of claim 22 wherein, if the user is a homeowner or if the user-selected loan

purpose is to purchase a home, the server is further adapted to receive a transmittal from the user

comprising one or more loan-related input parameters, determine which loans are to be recommended to the user based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters, and transmit to the user a suggestion of one or more loans based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters.

26.   The system of claim 25 further comprising an information storage facility operatively connected to the communications network, the information database including searchable loan-related input parameters, wherein the server incorporates said searchable loan-related input parameters into recommending loans to the user.

27.   The system of claim 25 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's credit rating.

28.   The system of claim 27 wherein the user's credit rating is real-time input parameter.

29.   The system of claim 25 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's current loan status, wherein the user's current loan status is determined by whether the user currently has one or more outstanding loans.

30.   The system of claim 27 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's goal.

31.   The system of claim 30 wherein the user's goal is to minimize total payments.

32. The system of claim 30 wherein the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest costs.

33. The system of claim 30 wherein, if the user has one or more outstanding loans, the user's goal is to pay off the suggested loan in the same amount of time as the time remaining on the user's one or more outstanding loans.

34. The system of claim 30 wherein the server is adapted to determine which loan options are available to the user based upon the user's loan purpose and the user's current loan status and is further adapted to calculate the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option based upon the user's goal.

35. A machine readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution by a processor to perform a method of recommending loans to a user based upon a user-selected loan purpose, the method comprising:

requesting from the user a purpose for the loan;

receiving the user-selected loan purpose; and

recommending loans for the user based upon the user-selected loan purpose.

36. The medium of claim 35, wherein the method of recommending loans to the user based upon a user-selected loan purpose further comprises determining if the user is a homeowner.

37. The medium of claim 36 wherein, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, the method of recommending loans to the user based upon a selected loan purpose further comprises suggesting to the user one or more unsecured loan options based on the user-selected loan purpose.

38. The medium of claim 36 wherein, if the user is determined not to be a homeowner and if the user-selected loan purpose is not purchasing a home, the method of recommending loans to the user based upon a selected loan purpose further comprises suggesting to the user one or more collateralized loan options tailored to the user-selected loan purpose.

39. The medium of claim 36 wherein, if the user is a homeowner or if the user-selected loan purpose is to purchase a home, the method of recommending loans to the user based upon a selected loan purpose further comprises:

receiving from the user one or more loan-related input parameters;

determining which loans are to be recommended to the user based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters; and

suggesting to the user one or more loans based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters.

40. The medium of claim 39 wherein suggesting to the user one or more loans based upon the user-selected loan purpose and the one or more loan-related input parameters comprises providing the user with multiple loan recommendations based upon a level of acceptable user risk.

41. The medium of claim 39 wherein determining which loans are to be recommended to the user further comprises searching for additional loan-related input parameters and incorporating said additional loan-related input parameters into the step of determining which loans are to be recommended to the user.

42. The medium of claim 41 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's credit rating.

43. The medium of claim 42 wherein the user's credit rating is a real-time input parameter.

44. The medium of claim 39 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's current loan status, wherein the user's current loan status is determined by whether the user currently has one or more outstanding loans.

45. The medium of claim 44 wherein one of the one or more loan-related input parameters is the user's goal.

46. The medium of claim 45 wherein the user's goal is to minimize total payments.

47. The medium of claim 45 wherein the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest costs.

48.   The medium of claim 45 wherein, if the user has one or more outstanding loans, the user's goal is to pay off the suggested loan in the same amount of time as the time remaining on the user's one or more outstanding loans.

49.   The medium of claim 45 wherein determining which said one or more loans are to be recommended to the user comprises:

determining which loan options are available to the user based upon the user's loan purpose and the user's current loan status; and

calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option based upon the goal.

50.   The medium of claim 49 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to purchase a vehicle or to refinance an existing vehicle loan and the user's goal is to minimize total payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding principal portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term of the loan to obtain loan-specific total principal payments;

comparing the loan-specific total principal payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total principal payment.

51.   The medium of claim 49 wherein, if the user's loan purpose is to purchase a vehicle or refinance an existing vehicle loan and the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding interest portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term of the loan to obtain loan-specific total interest payments;

comparing the loan-specific total interest payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total interest payment.

52.   The medium of claim 49 wherein, if the user's loan purpose includes getting cash and the user's goal is to minimize total payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding principal portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by addition of applicable closing costs and points;

adjusting the annual amount by a fixed interest rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term the user intends to keep the loan to obtain a loan-specific total principal payment;

comparing the loan-specific total principal payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total principal payment.

53.   The medium of claim 49 wherein, if the user's loan purpose involves is to obtain cash or to save on their mortgage and the user's goal is to minimize after-tax interest payments, calculating the most cost-effective loans for each said loan option comprises:

determining an annual amount the user must pay towards an outstanding interest portion of the loan;

adjusting the annual amount by addition of applicable closing costs, points and tax rate;

summing the adjusted annual amounts for a term the user intends to keep the loan to obtain a loan-specific total interest payment;

comparing the loan-specific total interest payments of one or more available loans; and

choosing one or more of the one or more available loans having a lowest total interest payment.